PROVINCE
OF
PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

Speech from the Throne

At The Opening of the

Second Session

of the

Fifty-sixth General Assembly

of the Province of

Prince Edward Island

March 6th, 1984

THE HONOURABLE
JOSEPH AUBIN DOIRON

LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR OF THE PROVINCE
OF
PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

85-0430/

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY:

It is my privilege, in the name of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, to welcome you to this Second Session of the Fifty-Sixth General Assembly of the Province of Prince Edward Island.

It was with great pleasure and pride that my Government received their Royal Highnesses, the Prince and Princess of Wales, on Prince Edward Island during this past year. As Her Majesty's representative on Prince Edward Island, I know that their visit was an historic occasion that demonstrated the overwhelming affection and loyalty Islanders feel towards the Royal Family. It is abundantly clear that the Royal Couple holds a special place in the hearts and minds of the people of Prince Edward Island. My Government trusts that Prince Edward Island now holds a similarly special place in the hearts and minds of their Royal Highnesses, the Prince and Princess of Wales. My Government looks forward to their return with great pleasure.

MONSIEUR L'ORATEUR SUPPLEANT ET
MEMBRES DE L'ASSEMBLEE LEGISLATIVE,

J'ai l'honneur, au nom de Sa Majesté la Reine Elizabeth Deux, de vous souhaiter la bienvenue à cette seconde session de la cinquante-sixième assemblée générale de la Province de l'Ile-du-Prince-Edouard.

Ce fut avec grand plaisir et fierté que mon Gouvernement a accueilli Leurs Altesses Royales, le Prince et la Princesse de Galles à l'Ile-du-Prince-Edouard l'an dernier. A titre de représentant de Sa Majesté à l'Ile-du-Prince-Edouard, je vois dans leur visite une occasion historique qui a démontré la grande affection et la fierté qu'ont les Prince-Edouardiens envers la Famille Royale. Il est très clair que Leurs Altesses Royales tiennent une place spéciale dans le coeur et dans l'esprit des citoyens de l'Ile-du-Prince-Edouard. Mon Gouvernement a bien confiance que l'Ile-du-Prince-Edouard occupe une place également spéciale dans les coeurs et les esprits de Leurs Altesses Royales, le Prince et la Princesse de Galles. Mon Gouvernement compte sur le plaisir de les revoir.

THE ECONOMY

My Government continues to believe in those principles that support our Island lifestyle. We have faith that our traditional industries and natural advantages will continue to create new opportunities and new jobs that will strengthen our Island communities. We are pleased that new oppportunities, complimentary to our objectives, are becoming apparent.

Change is everwhere, as my Government indicated last year, and everywhere the pace of change is accelerating. We find a major transition occuring in economic growth, in patterns of development, in investment, in opportunities for employment, especially the creation of meaningful, long-term jobs. New technologies are altering our sources of wealth by placing greater emphasis than every before on the role of human resources.

If we recognize these economic forces at work, we can act decisively and take advantage of favourable emerging trends. The future is rich with opportunity.

It is the conviction of my Government that now, more than ever, Islanders can maintain our traditional sense of community and enjoy new levels of prosperity at the same time. We remain committed to strengthening our traditional community-based way of life and we are taking practical measures to fulfill that commitment.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, my Government holds that economic health fosters social well-being and protects the integrity and uniqueness of our communities. Because economic trends now free us from the need for artificial development, we can generate appropriate economic growth. That is the exciting reality of the future of Prince Edward Island.

New technology is already influencing our lifestyle. Islanders must acknowledge this change and turn technological change to our own advantage.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in order to realize this policy and to propose a direction to meet the challenge of change, my Government will table for the consideration of all members the "Prince Edward Island Development Strategy". This wide-ranging strategy for economic growth is the result of thoughtful discussion between my Government and various sectors of our economy in order to provide long-term direction for development.

My Government's economic strategy calls for us to continue to maintain and support our traditional resource sectors. In addition, we must build on the strengths now possessed by Prince Edward Island in the new economic climate. When we examine carefully where our natural advantages lie, we find several new areas of opportunity and emphasis:

- the advantage of being an Island
- the advantage of smaller-scale operations
- the advantage of human resources
- the advantage of quality

My Government recognizes that our Island environment will allow us to develop industries, such as disease-free seed stock, where control of imports is important.

Similarly, it is becoming clear that innovative technologies are especially suited to our smaller-scale Island operations.

My Government notes that new economic environment places great emphasis on human resources as the key to success. Our strategy will act as a catalyst to encourage imagination, initiative, and the bold, entrepreneurial spirit of Islanders.

Here on Prince Edward Island, we have a long tradition of excellence and a concern for quality. My Government recognizes that excellence is, and must continue to be, one of the Island's advantages.

ECONOMIC STRATEGIES

My Government's policies and economic strategy includes a fresh approach to economic development as we enter a new era.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, two significant initiatives are indicative of my Government's strategic approach. Our commitment to preserving traditional resource industries is exemplified in our response to the withdrawal of Canada Packers from Prince Edward Island. The establishment of the Atlantic Veterinary College is a clear example or our commitment to innovation.

The departure of Canada Packers illustrates what is happening in the industrialized economy all across North America. The effect of such a centralizing trend on Prince Edward Island was clear. In order to preserve our livestock industry, a long-term solution had to be found. My Government joined with livestock organizations and the federal government to pursue a solution. The House will be informed on the progress of those negotiations.

The Veterinary College is an outstanding example of the way in which new technology can strengthen our resource sectors and also create new opportunities. The Veterinary College, for instance, will encourage increased quality and health standards in agricultural production while its Fish Diseases Program will spark new directions in the Island fishery and aquaculture industry. Biotechnology and other technology-oriented industries will develop as logical spin-offs of the research activities at the Veterinary College.

In agriculture, the fishery, and in every other sector of the Island economy, my Government is creating incentives for the application of appropriate technology. Such application will enable us to do better what we are now doing well, to do new things we have never done before, and to engage in the necessary research and development that will create new areas of economic growth.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, these two projects are just highlights of my Government's strategy for economic growth. Three critical elements form the heart of this innovative strategy: it is market-led; it is committed to the development of our human resources; it is action-oriented. All of my Ministers have undertaken programs consistent with this strategy and my Government is pleased to outline some of their principal initiatives.

My Government has formed a dynamic, new Department of Industry combining activities in community economic development, manpower and human resource development and serving the manufacturing sector.

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL INITIATIVES

We will continue to vigorously promote job opportunities for youth and the development of their entrepreneurial skills through the Student Venture Program.

In recognition of new requirements for training and education, my Government has established the Human Resource Division within the Department of Industry. This consolidation will ensure that Islanders are trained to capitalize on development opportunities and that my Government's development efforts capitalize on our substantial human resource base. It will ensure a maximization of opportunities for Islanders.

My Government's Department of Agriculture will decrease its administrative responsibilities thus allowing an increase in its efforts in extension-oriented programs.

We recognize that successful farming requires sophisticated management practices as well as technology. We will, therefore, expand our pilot programs in Dairy and Potato Financial Management and Planning to include other commodities.

We will continue to assist in developing Farmers Markets, expanding on the base that has already been established in Wood Islands, Montague, Charlottetown, Summerside, Bloomfield and Souris.

My Government's Department of Finance and Tourism will continue to develop innovative marketing programs for the Tourism Industry, including special promotions in Quebec and New Brunswick.

We are pleased with the opening of the Prince Edward Hilton International and Convention Centre and look forward to the opening of Rodd's Mill River Resort in June 1984.

We also note with pride the opening of the Culinary Institute of Canada. This Institute will contribute to excellence in food preparation and will provide job opportunities at local, national, and international levels.

My Government's Department of Energy and Forestry has been involved in negotiations designed to affect a real decrease in the cost of electricity to Islanders. My Minister of Energy will be reporting to the House on the status of these negotiations.

We continue to explore a variety of energy projects, including the installation of new wood-burning facilities at the Summerside Manor, Montague Junior High School, and Sleepy Hollow Correctional Institute.

We are continuing to develop new projects in the fields of renewable energy, through the application of new technologies and the creation of new markets.

My Government is pleased to announce the signing of the Forest Resource Development Agreement to plant more than one million seedlings per year for the next five years; and the establishment of a Forest Ranger School in New Brunswick. These programs will provide employment as well as establishing a living heritage for our children.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, my Government's economic initiatives are closely linked with our attention to the quality of life on Prince Edward Island.

In order to respond to changing economic and social circumstances, my Minister of Education has appointed a School System Review Commission that will undertake a one-year review of Prince Edward Island's primary and secondary education system, and make recommendations for improvements.

In recognition of the impact computers are having on society, and because of their potential for use in our schools, the Minister of Education will be announcing a policy on the application of computers in education. This policy is in response to requests from both parents and educators and is based on the recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Computers in Education. The program will outline a comprehensive approach to teaching children about using computers.

The programs of my Government's Department of Community and Cultural Affairs also ensure a better environment and quality of life.

We will formalize a new five-year plan with Ducks Unlimited through which funds will be available for improving the waterfowl habitat as well as purchasing wetlands for protection and future management.

My Government will actively explore the potential for a "cultural industry" on Prince Edward Island.

This interdepartmental study will involve extensive consultations with the private sector and community orgnaizations. It will focus on books and periodical publishing, film production, sound recording, the visual and performing arts and the crafts industry.

The Department of Transportation and Public Works enters into the first phase of a three year highway recap and rehabilitation program. This program will ensure that our highway system will continue to provide a satisfactory level of service for our motoring public. Our objective will be to complete one hundred kilometres each year for three years.

The result will be that many of our rural roads will reach a standard more capable of carrying year-round traffic.

My Government remains committed to supporting our fishing industry and is pleased that 1983 was a very successful year for both our inshore fishermen and processors.

We will continue programs aimed at reducing input costs to our fishermen and support initiatives which could result in more access to the Gulf resource. We will encourage more processing of our resource before export in order to assist our economy.

My Government is pleased that these and other initiatives represent significant steps in fostering economic growth.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the world is fast becoming a single marketplace and Prince Edward Island must find its special niche. In the emerging economic order we have every confidence in the ability of Prince Edward Island to compete worldwide.

THE PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

As a reflection of that confidence, and after thoughtful consideration of these economic realities, my Government has taken another major step to keep Prince Edward Island moving in the right direction for the future. My Government is pleased to announce that we will introduce legislation to establish a new Crown Corporation, the PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND DEVELOPMENT AGENCY. It is the role of government to enhance the proper climate for economic growth, a climate that supports the initiatives of the private sector. My Government's PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND DEVELOPMENT AGENCY will create that environment.

The establishment of this new Crown Corporation will complement the development efforts of all of the Economic Development Departments including the new structure and definition recently given to the Department of Industry. In addition to new duties, it will carry out functions previously dealt with by Industrial Enterprises Incorporated and the Market Development Centre. It will encourage the integration of money, ideas, and markets to create jobs for Islanders. Its structure reflects a new and dynamic meeting of representatives from the public and private sectors in order to implement the market-led approach to the Island economy.

The PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND DEVELOPMENT AGENCY is based on a new view of development, one that does not heavily rely on artificial inducements, but instead builds on the natural strengths of the Island.

Through this Corporation, technology will be used to improve our way of life. For farmers, this will mean farming better instead of bigger; for fishermen, this will mean adding value to products. Technology will provide new ways to diversify products and locate new markets. We cannot let technology threaten our way of life or our employment, instead we must use it is enhance our lives on Prince Edward Island.

It is the view of my Government that no changes in policy within the new economic climate could be more significant for Prince Edward Island than the movement forward from a production-led to a market-led economy. The market-led approach finds markets first and creates products to suit their needs. Those products must be related to the natural strengths of the Island.

We believe that in order to take advantage of new economic trends, the private sector must continue to operate with the spirit of entrepreneurs, for it is the private sector that must lead the way in creating economic growth, new investment and new jobs.

STRENGTHENING THE ISLAND COMMUNITY

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in addressing social concerns, my Government firmly believes that many of the social problems on Prince Edward Island are directly associated with lack of economic growth and opportunity for meaningful employment.

It must be the policy of government, therefore, to deal not with superficial solutions, but with the fundamental, underlying causes, the economic factors that contribute to social problems in Prince Edward Island. My Government believes that the setting in motion of our economic strategy and programs, with the jobs and opportunities that will result, must accompany new initiatives in the social policy area.

It is the view of my Government that Prince Edward Island must find new ways to meet social needs, or costs will continue to outstrip our ability to pay for the programs already in place. Just as my Government is developing the ways to use technology to transform our resource sectors, we must also seek to strengthen systems of community support throughout Prince Edward Island.

My Government recognizes the need for continuing stability in the area of social policy during this period of change. Our approach is, therefore, threefold.

First, to continue to provide adequate levels of services for those who truly need them.

Second, to redefine our social policy goals to reduce dependency, encourage a spirit of self-reliance and strengthen our social institutions to improve the quality of our lives within caring and compassionate communities.

Third, my Government is working to reshape existing social programs to give them a new emphasis on client responsibility, employment opportunities and the avoidance of dependency.

My Government's Job Creation Program of the Department of Health and Social Services has been very successful in bringing 1200 men and women off the welfare roles and into the workplace. It is significant that this program to create jobs was developed and administered by the Department of Health and Social Services, reflecting my Government's view that social well-being and economic health are closely associated.

My Government's Department of Health and Social Services continues to improve the quality of care for seniors, by replacing outdated facilities and placing new emphasis on community-based services that will support seniors in their desire to remain in their own homes. To facilitate this, we are placing coordinators in the regions.

My Government is pleased that we are able to improve conditions for mental health patients in the province. We are removing two buildings at Riverside, which have previously been judged to be unacceptable, and replacing them with a modern facility.

My Government has begun an examination of the important issues related to the development of human resources in light of our economic strategy and in terms of social policy. This review will consider the impact of change on the workforce, including such matters such as new skills requirements for new jobs, an enhanced role for women, and a wide range of matters. These considerations will help us strengthen the human resource base necessary to realize our economic development goals and reverse a long-standing trend of exporting our talent.

In addition, we will examine the current Social programs in Prince Edward Island. This examination entitled, "Prince Edward Island Social Policy for the Future", with be finalized this year.

My Government will provide the opportunity for the Assembly to debate the question of the legal age for purchasing alcoholic beverages.

NATIONAL CONCERNS AND INITIATIVES

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in two matters of national importance, my Government has recently published two significant documents, each speaking with the same clear voice, placing on the public record what Islanders believe Canada should be.

In December 1983, my Government published our submission to the Joint Committee of the Senate and House of Commons on Senate Reform. In that document, we argued that only a federal state with a second chamber in which provinces and territories were represented equally could enjoy national harmony. We recommended an elected Senate with equal representation from all provinces.

One month earlier, in November 1983, my Government had published our submission to the Macdonald Royal Commission on Canada's Economic Prospects. In that document, we applied the same principles and argued that a federal system can work only if all the partners play a role. We suggested, therefore, that the solution to our economic difficulties could only be accomplished through a change in the federal government's decision-making process to reflect the interests of all provinces.

My Government is pleased that we have had the opportunity to set out for all provinces and all Canadians what Prince Edward Island believes the Canadian Confederation is and can be.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY:

Various legislative proposals will be introduced for your consideration during this Session.

You will be asked to appropriate the funds required for the services and payments required by this Assembly.

The Public Accounts and the reports of the various departments and agencies for the year ending March 31, 1983, will be tabled for your information. The Interim Report, forecasting estimated Revenues and Expenditures for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1984, and the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for the fiscal year beginning April 1, 1984, will be presented for your consideration.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY:

May Divine Providence guide your deliberations.